243 Hungarian soil, especially in sandy areas. The production of rice was before 1945 only in an experimental stage. In the post-war period, the government's extensive irrigation program and favoring of rice has resulted in a now increasing rice yield coming from approximately 50,000 cadastral [249] acres. Sugar beets provide Hungary's sugar.

● 245 274 At present, vineyards cover 800,000 cadastral acres and produce world-famous wines. The yearly output of the wine industry is 3-4 million liters of wine with an average alcoholic content of 11-11.5 per cent. Hungarians are the sixth largest wine consumers in Europe, averaging 38 liters a year per person.

244 Vegetables are grown throughout the country, with certain regions specializing in particular crops. Nagykörös furnishes most of the cucumbers, Kalocsa and Szeged pepper and paprika, and Makó is the center of garlic and onion production. Tomatoes come from the regions of Budapest, Hatvan, Kecskemét, Nagykörös and Kaposvár. The yearly production of excellent (5.5 per cent sugar content) tomatoes amounts to approximately 7,000 FREIGHT CAR wagon-loads.

245 The long summer sunshine gives to Hungarian fruit an almost unsurpassed quality. The following chart shows the pre-war number of fruit

245 trees in Hungary and the sugar content of the fruits as compared with corresponding United States figures. There are no data readily available for the number of fruit trees in 1955, but it is safe to assume that the 1956 figures will reach the pre-war level.

Fruit	Number of trees (in millions)	Sugar content (Per cent) Hungary	USA
apples	6.0	12.2	11.1
sour cherries	2.5	11.8	11.6
peaches	3.8	10.9	8.8
pears	no data	10.2	8.9
plums	9.2	12.1	13.3
apricots	2.8	9.0	10.4
melons	---	6.6	6.0
strawberries	---	7.4	7.1
cherries	2.0	10.4	9.5
grapes	---	17.6	11.5
English walnuts	1.9	----	----
quince	0.5	no data	no data

248 New crops have been introduced into Hungary since World War II. Economically the most important of these is cotton, which is being grown on some 100,000 cadastral acres. Together with other industrial plants, such as flax, hemp and oleaginous plants, it is reported to cover now some 20 per cent of the total arable land. Others still in an experimental stage are: new fibre plants (kenaf, ramie, snow nettle), fodder crops (chumiz), peanuts, kok sagis (a rubber plant of Russian origin), and citrus fruits.[1]

[1] The English equivalents of these new plants are not known.

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flimsy mud-built houses. It is only recently that the work, not only of regulating the rivers against flood, but of irrigating the plains against drought, has been seriously undertaken. With modern methods an intensive cultivation, in particular of fruit trees, was begun. Through it some centres, such as Kecskemét, have achieved considerable prosperity.

THE BOUNDARY HILLS. The plain is bounded by hills. In the south the plain reaches right down to the frontiers of historic Hungary, and the first hills are those of Serbia. In the north, however, the Trianon frontier still left Hungary a certain amount of hilly country. This comes down close to the capital itself north of Budapest; indeed, the Danube runs here through what is almost a gorge, with the ruins of old castles overhanging it. East of Budapest the plain reaches further north, but there are still considerable hills, the summits of which are covered with beech forests and their lower slopes with vineyards. Here, too, are some noteworthy towns: Miskolcz and Diosgyõr, centres of industry, and Eger, seat of an archbishopric, with the remains of an old Turkish fortress and a Turkish minaret still to be seen. Beyond this again comes another group of isolated hills, which produce the famous Tokaj wine, the richest and most powerful of all the Hungarian wines, of which it is said that it is 'the king of wines and the wine of kings'.

The mountains which enclose the Alföld on the east are those which form the boundary of Transylvania, a great table-land encircled north, east

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some fruits, especially peaches and apricots, excellent liqueurs are distilled. In recent years, largely under the pressure of military necessity, the cultivation of industrial crops has made much progress.

THE VINEYARDS. Wine is produced in almost all parts of Hungary, often in very small peasant vineyards and by rather primitive methods. It is said that one family in every four of the entire population owns a vineyard. After the wheat harvest, the vintage is the great month of Hungarian agriculture, when half the population is out of its houses, gathering the grapes and pressing them in the tiny whitewashed huts which each family owns in its vineyard, perhaps a mile or so out of the village. The finer wines, which are exported, are cultivated in larger vineyards owned by the Crown, monasteries, or big landed proprietors.

LIVESTOCK. Livestock was at one time even more important than wheat, which only in the last century replaced cattle as the chief produce. In recent years, stock-breeding has regained a good deal of its importance and Hungary has now a large population of cattle and swine. Hungarians are rather heavy meat-eaters, even the poorer classes consuming a lot of bacon and lard. There is also a big export trade in cattle and pigs, live and slaughtered, and in various animal products, such as hides and bacon. Horses are bred for draught purposes, and the finer breeds also for sport. Sheep are bred less extensively: Hungarian wool is not of high quality, and the population does not take kindly to mutton as a dish.

Poultry, including geese, are kept on a very ex-

585 which the girl becomes a woman. Taking off the wreath is usually the task of the best man. Sometimes the best man sticks the wreath onto his stick, sometimes it is hung onto a pitch fork and sometimes is carried back amidst the wedding party stuck onto a sword. All these are the remnants of extremely ancient customs. In the 17th century, at Transylvanian aristocratic weddings, the wreath was cut off the bride's head as a memento that «she shall thus behave herself in holy wedlock, that if she besoils it, a sword will fall onto her head.» But this Hungarian custom existed already in the 13th century. The son of the Hungarian king Béla IV. in 1264 also cut the wreath off the head of his bride, Kunigund, with a sword, according to the words of a German chronicler — juxta ritum suae gentis — according to the custom of his own nation. One may judge from all this the antiquity and the importance of popular custom from the point of view of cultural history.

The gathering of the grapes

521 This is the last of the great outdoor tasks which have
245 to be done in autumn. In time it is the last, in the way of amusement and gaiety it is the first. No wonder, as it means collecting, sorting and pressing the universal medicine of all Hungarian sadness. It is a lasting joy to the farmer if he presses a great quantity of nectar in his cellar and it is at least one gay day of oblivion for the poor people who, «sic vos non vobis», collect for others and press for others : but on this occasion they can also drink plentifully — themselves. Gathering the grapes without gaiety and

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527 wine is like having a wedding without music. According
245 to ancient custom, the gathering of the grapes is not serious work: that is, only half of it is serious, its other half is made up of amusement. It is part of the tradition that the work shall be unpaid — and one does not look a gift horse in the mouth. It is like the help volunteered for picking maize and plucking feathers, or for reaping the harvest or helping to build a house in the Szekler country, where all relations, friends and neighbours co-operate and in exchange for a few turns of work receive a few glasses of wine or turns of dancing. Of course the gipsies cannot be missing from the gathering of the grapes. In ancient times they had pipes, later on gipsy players of stirring, undisciplined Hungarian songs. But why have discipline in enjoyment: why use a breake when the cart is going up hill?

[192] In Hungarian the process of gathering the grapes is expressed by one word: *Szüret*. When a Hungarian has an unexpected joy, when he has hopes of a great success, when a vista of unforeseen possibilities opens up before him, surpassing his most daring expectations, he expresses his joy with the one word: *Szüret!*

245 The Hungarian vineyards afford pleasure and gaiety,
273 they deserve affection and sacrifices. The volcanic soil of
[134] the Hungarian vineyards is unsurpassed in any other part of the world. It yields the golden coloured «aszu» of Tokaj, which according to a Hungarian saying revives even the dead, the red wine of Eger called «bull's blood», the sweet poison of Badacsony or Somlyó which makes the dumb speak and forces even diplomats to tell the truth! Long experience has ripened the Hungarian proverb: truth is found in wine; «in vino veritas» as our Latin speaking forbears used to say. Wine is the national drink of the Hungarians. Thus does a popular song express this truth:

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Let's go away from here,
We may get a hiding!
No, let's not go
Until the violins are playing!
Bring wine for the Hungarians,
Brandy for the Slovaks,
Beer for the Germans!

The grapes ripen in a dry summer and a long, mild autumn: they take a long time to grow and ripen, and in every part of the country they can boast a different fame and quality. There are as many kinds of wine as there are Hungarian dialects: it has as many colours as Hungarian peasant costumes, it has as many tastes, flavours, bouquets as Hungarian songs or Hungarian tunes. Its effect and strength surprise one like the beauty of Hungarian shepherd carvings or embroideries.

Every peasant vineyard, even if only half an acre in [343] size, has its own cellar built into a hill, before which is a porch with a fireplace. People go there very frequently to sit about, roast bacon, drink a few glasses of wine and smoke. In some places whole villages grow up in the [361] vineyards, called hill-villages. Their laws are even more strict than those of the other villages. And strictest of all are the laws observed during the gathering of the grapes. Those who behaved badly at a «szüret» were in ancient times sent back to the bosom of Abraham: that is to say, they were removed from amongst the living. People were not even allowed to swear in the vineyards. In olden times even justice was stayed at the time of the gathering of the grapes. Though it was never admitted, yet in fact even Mohamed's prohibition of strong drink was ignored during the Turkish occupation, those 250 years during which the Turks came in contact with Hungarian wine, — years which had such a disastrous influence on the advance of Hungarian

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245 culture. Faithful agas and beys were carried home on
273 stretchers more than once from the table of hospitable Hungarian soldiers and captains; or perhaps not from the table, but from under the table . . .

245 To-day, as well as in olden times, most weddings
527 are celebrated on new bread and new wine, that is after the grapes have been gathered. Gathering the grapes is the gay closing of the yearly farm work, it is the crowning of labour with grapes ! The saying of a Hungarian ballad :

> She who finds a red grape first
> Will celebrate her wedding in autumn !

indicates merely the usual season in which weddings are held. Small wonder that the young people look forward to the gay days of autumn with an even greater longing than the farmer who has run out of wine. The time for gathering the grapes round the Balaton (Badacsony) and in the part of Terézia, Somlyó, Orsolya and Tokaj begins on the day of Simon and Judas, that is generally in the second half of October. But in 1812 it happened that in consequence of the heavy snow the grapes could not be gathered in that year at all, but only at the end of February in the following year. The new wine thus came too late and the weddings were left over until the following spring . . . When the storks came back ! . . .

The vineyards, which are carefully guarded and are deadly quiet in the late autumn, are seething with life at the time of gathering the grapes. The hills seem to move: coloured patches swarm about on them, songs resound, guns go off. The rattles and whips for frightening birds are now used to frighten the female part of the assembly. In these light-hearted days the guard shoots off all his cartridges, he will have — if he'll be able to buy them — some more next year; to-day is the day of gaiety and

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unrestrained noise ! The gipsy creeps about the hills, from vineyard to vineyard, as on a namesday or on a great feast, to greet his favourite clients and, especially the owner of the vineyard, who comes to listen to him at the inn when he has run out of his own wine. The door of the cellar is open, the wine from last year and the year before takes effect, provokes laughter and jokes, and brings songs to the lips of those who like it. Not only does it inspire speech and song ; it also adjusts hats to a rakish angle and makes the steps of the guard uncertain as he goes from vineyard to vineyard : and, if it strikes a «long hair», its effect is also sufficient : women understand the jokes much better !

In the open space before the cellar the «paprika» meet boils ; the stuffed cabbage, brought from home, is warmed up, and those whose appetite has been taken away by the grapes can still put it right before dinner with excellent rape and wonderful, fragrant peach brandy. The table is laid on grass which is going grey, around it blossom good appetite, good health, friendship, gaiety and one more thing unavoidable amongst Hungarians : — toasts — and later on discussions about politics. Finally the children have to recite a few poems. Most frequently we hear the appropriate poem of the well known Hungarian poet Lévay, called : «Our *Szüret*» . . . And then they go home early in the falling twilight, as to-morrow there is going to be another day. There is not much work in autumn, and it might give one the chance of a grand answer if someone asked how long the gathering of the grapes lasted . . .

But the «szüret» continues at home and in more than one place it is followed by a hot supper, its end being well after midnight.

Sometimes things do not go as smoothly as all that. If the weather is unkind, spiteful people wish the gatherers of the grapes a «*Large vintage*», or «*Big boots*». This is not

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a good wish. It is a veiled reference to the fact that the channels of the heavens increase what has grown by the mercy of God; the vintage will be larger, because water is mixed with it. The big boots are wished as a protection against the terrible mud, which makes not only walking, but even standing a miserably difficult thing on the steep hills, and causes such big «sandals» to stick to the boots every minute that it takes enormous strenght to get rid of them.

The owner of a large vineyard engages workers paid by the day. According to ancient custom they make an enormous «grape» bouquet, such a big one that two people have to carry it on their shoulders on a pole. Soon there is a whole procession. The gipsies go in front playing gay dance tunes, after them come a few players, who do all kinds of comic turns, then the gatherers of the grapes, then a few people who carry flags, finally girls dressed in white surrounding the enormous cluster-like grape bouquet. The girls wear wreaths made of wild flowers on their heads. They pass through the village dancing, singing and shouting, they go to the house of the farmer and, on their way, they drink from their flask to the health of every person they meet. In the farmer's house they hang the big cluster of grapes onto the ceiling, and they are then given a good meal.

In other places the lads go through the village on horseback, in their wake come the girls in carriages and the «szüret» procession is finished at the village inn with a dance. The innkeepers of Budapest also arrange the same kind of thing at the time of the «szüret» with the help of people paid for the job, thus uniting business advertisement with ancient Hungarian customs. A procession of this kind in the Hungarian capital usually ends up in a little inn with a garden in Buda, where everyone can join the dance

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245 527 which follows it. This is an artificial flower bouquet, a pale copy of the old, familiar custom, but it tries with much good will to create at least the illusion of the real thing for the joy of people who live in the great town. On seeing it people from the country-side at least dwell on the memories of their childhood.

The richest, brightest and gayest «szüret» customs prevailed in the districts in which the wine harvest was the best and richest. The first of these is the district of Tokaj and in it the little town of Mád, which is a famous place for grape ceremonies. The entertainments of its gentry are worthy of a novelist's pen. The dances of its coopers and agricultural labourers preserved a whole list 415 789 of ancient Hungarian customs. Speaking of Carnival, let us mention a few.

If wine is the favourite national drink of the Hungarians, it is necessary for it to appear in proper attire. The things with which wine is clothed, are : a stone bottle, a flask or a noggin. The noggin can be a decoration on a table, a nice partner on a journey, a dear lover always kissed with joy ! The person who knocks it out of our hands shall be cursed ! Terrifying, fearful words are usually written on the flask, to cut short all kinds of evil thoughts. For instance :

To the person desiring to steal this flask,
I wish that he shall become so grand,
That he shall push wheel-barrows in Buda or Pest,
And become the captain of the beggars !

But if we approach the beloved flask without evil thoughts, it speaks to us as Hungarian men usually address their guests :

This bottle, made of clay, belongs to Simon Kiss,
From this he offers a drink to many of his friends.
Take a nice, long draught from it,
A bad road does not matter to a good horse !

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527 to the landlord by his harvesters in a little scene of touching simplicity.

"We have woven a beautiful wreath from slender stalks and heavy wheat-ears and from the many lovely flowers of the fields. We have brought it before our lord to join with him in thanksgiving to God for His blessings and a plentiful harvest..."

In similar words the landlord expresses his thanks and throws open the gates to the throng of happy harvesters, to whom he offers a rich meal, casks of wine and pouches of virgin tobacco. The gypsies of the village-end gather as from nowhere, and to the strains of the music, merry songs are sung, to be followed by dancing that has no end...

Corn-husking, towards the end of the summer, and the wine-harvest, in early autumn, are celebrated [245] in a very similar fashion. The gathering of grapes begins in Hungary about mid-October, usually on the Day of St Simon and St Judas. On the morning of the wine-harvest the congregation goes to church. After the invocation of God's blessing, they gather in the market-place, and from there, to the strains of church hymns, the traditional march to the vineyards begins. The solemn hymns soon yield to merrier tunes, which grow brighter and brighter as the march proceeds.

In places the ripening grapes are protected from hungry birds and from thieves until the whole crop is ready to be picked. The birds are scared away by the incessant songs of the girls; the thieves are kept at bay by the presence of the boys. But the group of the latter always stay outside the enclosure reserved for the women-folk.

After the grapes have matured, gay harvesters gather and take them to the press-house. As at the end of the